

During his military career he earned two Bronze Stars, one Meritorious Service Medal and four Army Commendation Medals and served in Korea, Germany and Vietnam. Upon retiring from the Army, Sonny went back to school and received his bachelor of science degree in criminal justice from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

He is the recipient of numerous awards for his service to the veterans and the community. In 1988 he was selected for the Fourth Congressional District Distinguished Citizen Award and was the Walker County State Employee of the Year for 1983, 1984 and 1985. He was also twice selected by the American Legion as the Veterans Service Officer of the Year.

Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to honor Lucious Carroll Richardson for his many years of dedicated service to our Nation's veterans. He has had an enduring impact on his country, community, friends and family. He is a man of great dignity and character who takes pride in the accomplishments of those he has helped over the years. It is clear that he has been a friend and advocate to the veterans of Walker County and the entire surrounding area. Madam Speaker, no doubt Sonny will be greatly missed in his position with the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, I know that Sonny will still remain a friend to those who have served their country. Sonny is an inspiring role model for all of us and I join his friends, family and colleagues in wishing him God's richest blessings in his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO THE COPPELL HIGH SCHOOL LARIETTES DRILL TEAM

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Coppell High School Lariettes Drill Team for earning the National Championship at the Contest of Champions in Orlando's Walt Disney World of Sports complex on March 3-5, 2007. This is the second National Championship in 4 years for the Coppell Lariettes.

The Lariettes competed against 50 schools from across the Nation and took first-place honors in all categories they competed in to earn the National Championship award.

Each of the 69 Lariettes worked tirelessly to perfect their intricate routines. Dedication, hard work and discipline were necessary for the dancers to achieve the standard of excellence required for a first-place finish.

Besides dancing, the Coppell Lariettes achieve high marks academically in addition to other disciplines such as singing, acting, video production, art, journalism and sports.

I would like to congratulate the Lariette director, Julie Jones on her exceptional work with this group of dancers and The Lariette Service Organization for organizing fund raising and team events.

Again, I offer my congratulations to the Coppell High School Lariettes Drill Team for an outstanding achievement.

EQUIPMENT FOR OUR MILITARY

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, thanks to long contributions of our soldiers and our veterans, America has amassed the most powerful military in the history of mankind. It is so powerful that we can almost imagine its resources are infinite. But they are not. They are limited, and due to the ever-expanding, ever-deteriorating war in Iraq, they are stretched dangerously thin. Our soldiers and their families will never complain, but that is why we must speak for them. We must ask—no, demand—that they have the equipment, training and support they need to succeed. And today, they do not.

Since the Iraq war began in 2003, the Army has lost nearly 2,000 wheeled vehicles and more than 100 armored vehicles. Almost half of the U.S. Army's entire supply of ground equipment is now deployed in the Middle East. The constant demands of combat and the treacherous terrain are wearing out equipment at up to nine times the usual rate.

America's military is overburdened, and now our nation must seriously discuss how best to deploy our depleted forces against the dangers of our day. In this age when we face so many perils, from sinister terrorists to an unstable North Korea to a belligerent Iran, do we truly want to devote so many precious resources to an open-ended Iraq war? Or has the time come to, responsibly and conscientiously, hold the Iraqi government responsible for its own stability?

Congress has the duty to demand from President Bush an unambiguous way forward. We should not dictate strategy, but we can and we must require the president to offer a plan to end the Iraq war and rebuild our strategic readiness. Congress and the American people will no longer tolerate an unending war. There must be real progress, sooner rather than later. And if the president and the Iraqi leadership cannot deliver, we must redeploy our troops.

I believe, to the core of my being, that our strategic readiness cannot survive an endless conflict in Iraq. We must make these important decisions based on the reality of the situation, not on where we wish we were. And so, in order to preserve the strength of the American armed forces and hold President Bush accountable, I am supporting the Iraq Accountability Act. I urge my colleagues to do the same. If they refuse to do so, if they cast their ballots for a stay-the-course strategy, then they are telling President Bush that everything is fine in Iraq—that it is OK to stretch our military to the breaking point. And that's just not right.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONTRACTING ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 1362) to reform acquisition practices of the Federal Government:

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring to the House's attention the correspondence between myself and Chairman WAXMAN. It deals with the jurisdictions of our respective committees.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,

Washington, DC, March 21, 2007.

Hon. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ, Chairwoman, Committee on Small Business, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN VELÁZQUEZ: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Small Business in H.R. 1362, the Accountability in Contracting Act.

I recognize that the Committee on Small Business has a valid claim to jurisdiction over Section 102 of the bill, and I appreciate your decision not to request a sequential referral. I recognize that your decision to forgo a sequential referral does not waive, reduce or otherwise affect the jurisdiction of the Committee on Small Business. Furthermore, I will support your request for representatives of the Small Business Committee to be conferees on the provisions over which you have jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference. I am grateful for the accommodation that you have shown the Oversight Committee.

A copy of this letter, as well as your accompanying letter, will be included as part of the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

HENRY A. WAXMAN,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS, Washington, DC, March 21, 2007.

Hon. HENRY WAXMAN, Chairman, Oversight and Government Reform Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write with regard to H.R. 1362, the Accountability in Contracting Act, a bill to reform the acquisition practices of the Federal Government. You introduced it on March 6, 2007, and was considered on the House floor on March 15, 2007 subject to a rule. The bill was referred to the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on the Armed Services Committee.

The bill that was reported to the House included Section 102 that would directly affect contracting programs contained within the Small Business Act—including the program established by Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 USC 637), the HUBZone program (15 USC 657a), and the service-disabled veteran procurement program (15 USC 637f)—that rely on agencies awarding government contracts without competition. These three programs are included within the exceptions to non-competitive procurement procedures contained in 41 USC 253(c) in paragraph (5) which allows contracts to be awarded without competition if they are covered by other statutes.

I wish to make clear that the Small Business Committee does not waive its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in those sections. My support of the bill was provided with the understanding that you and I agree that the referral and consideration of the bill does not in any way serve as a jurisdictional precedent for our two committees.

The parliamentarian and Speaker's offices have recognized that the Small Business